



Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission Meeting Notes

August 19, 2008 — 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.
Holiday Inn Cedar Falls – University Plaza
5826 University Ave
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

Present

Governor Chet Culver
Lieutenant Governor Patty Judge
Congressman Bruce Braley, First Congressional District of Iowa

Task Force Members Present

Major General Ron Dardis, Commission Chair, Johnston
Bill Bywater, Iowa City
Jim Davis, Charles City
Jim Fausett, Coralville
William Gerhard, Des Moines
Karris Golden, Waterloo
Brent Halling, Perry
Linda Larkin, Fort Madison
Nitza Lopez-Castillo, Columbus Junction
Carroll Reasoner, Cedar Rapids
Mike King, Creston
Mike Earley, Des Moines
Amy Truax, Parkersburg
Mark Wandro, Ankeny
Bev Wharton, Sioux City

Presenters

Donna Harvey, Hawkeye Valley Area Agency on Aging
Barbara Lynch, Iowa Department of Natural Resources
AJ Mumm, Polk County Emergency Management
Tom Newton, Iowa Department of Public Health
Mike Rosmann, Agriwellness, Inc.

Welcome

Major General Ron Dardis welcomed the group to the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission (RIAC) meeting and introduced himself as Commission Chairman and welcomed Commission guests Governor Culver, Lieutenant Governor Judge, and Congressman Braley. Major General Dardis thanked the Commission members for their time and effort and welcomed area legislators and citizens of surrounding communities in attendance. Major General Dardis explained that after touring local areas, Commission members now have a better perspective on the extent of damage. The mission of the RIAC is to assist in recovery, assess damage incurred by the disasters, and provide viable solutions to rebuild Iowa in a safer, stronger, and smarter way. Speak Up Iowa listening sessions allow the Commission to gather information and realize issues and concerns that citizens have in order to make informed decisions.

Opening Remarks

Major General Dardis thanked Governor Culver for his genuine concern for the well being of all Iowans. Governor Culver thanked Major General Dardis for his leadership of the RIAC and stated that the Commission is making great progress in reporting to the Governor and General Assembly by September 2. Governor Culver thanked Commission members for their time commitment and the sacrifices they have made and will continue to make. Governor Culver acknowledged the legislators present and noted that legislators of both parties have stepped up, joined together, and offered to help. Damage estimates are fast approaching \$1 billion in FEMA-eligible damage, and Iowa's disasters may prove to be one of the top twelve worst natural disasters in United States history. Governor Culver stated that RIAC and the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO) are trying to do everything possible to address short- and long-term needs, get businesses open, homes rebuilt, and people back on their feet. Governor Culver then introduced Lieutenant Governor Judge and recognized the Lt. Governor's excellent leadership since the first disaster in May and as the Executive Director of the Rebuild Iowa Office.

Lieutenant Governor Judge stated that her task today was to set the framework for long-term recovery and that the necessity for such recovery planning had been evident throughout the tour of the damaged areas surrounding Cedar Falls. Lieutenant Governor Judge stated that after all the disarray and disrepair incurred this summer, it has been wonderful to see Iowans' resilient spirits and the initiation of the rebuilding process. Lieutenant Governor Judge introduced Congressman Bruce Braley.

Congressman Braley Comments

Congressman Braley thanked local and state leaders and Commission members and stated that the process has been meaningful to local citizens. Congressman Braley recognized the contributions of local officials in recovery efforts. The Congressman referenced an assessment of the First Congressional District of Iowa, with 40 communities affected. Congressman Braley shared his personal experiences of disasters around May 25, witnessing how the tornado and heavy rains affected the surrounding communities. Congressman Braley stated that some images remain unforgettable, such as the amazing similarities between Hiroshima, Japan following the atomic bomb of World War II, and present-day Parkersburg, Iowa. The Congressman shared a story of sandbagging with a 14-year-old boy who was trying to save his grandmother's house. Congressman Braley stated that he has been pushing for additional federal funding in Washington. According to Director Jim Nussle of the Office of Management and Budget, there was \$5 billion in the pipeline before Congress appropriated \$2.65 billion in supplemental funding. Congressman Braley explained that fellow Iowa Congressmen Loebsack, Boswell, and he have been speaking with House Speaker Pelosi to push a visit to Iowa to witness the devastation first-hand. The Congressman stated that Speaker Pelosi has reassured him that there will be another supplemental funding stream for Iowa introduced before the end of September. The Iowa Society, a group of Iowans residing in Washington, recently put on a fundraiser that raised \$125,000 for Iowa disaster assistance. Congressman Braley noted that during the fundraiser two rainbows appeared over the Capitol dome. This image, explained the Congressman, is representative of the effort to coordinate the disaster relief here in Iowa.

Discussion of "Speak Up Iowa!" Listening Sessions

Major General Dardis thanked Congressman Braley for his comments. Major General Dardis explained that a Speak Up Iowa session would convene from 4:00 – 7:00 pm in the room next door. Major General Dardis invited Commission members and the audience to participate in the session. Nine stations represent the nine Rebuild Iowa Task Forces. Each station is staffed by RIO staff and Task Force members, and that there would be opportunities to post information online and submit feedback. Additional representatives from FEMA and the Small Business

Administration (SBA) are also available to answer questions. Major General Dardis encouraged everyone's participation and creative thinking in long-term recovery to rebuild Iowa in a safer, stronger, and smarter way. Major General Dardis stated that this is the fifth Speak Up Iowa session statewide. The previous sessions have taken place in Cedar Rapids, Wapello, Red Oak, and Fort Dodge.

Task Force Activities - Updates from Task Forces and Discussion

Lieutenant Governor Judge stated that the discussions of the Long Term Planning Task Force have been a unique challenge for the Rebuild Iowa Office, compared to the work of the other Task Forces. Lieutenant Governor Judge thanked Task Force staff for their work in the process. Nine Task Forces have been created that are chaired by Commission members and supported by RIO staff. In total, over 400 Iowans have participated in the Task Forces. Lieutenant Governor Judge stated that long-term recovery involves planning with a more visionary focus. Lieutenant Governor Judge explained that sustainable, family-friendly planning, energy efficiency, definition of communities, and infrastructure needs have been issues that the Long Term Planning Task Force has been addressing. Lieutenant Governor Judge acknowledged Susan Dixon of the Rebuild Iowa Office, Administrator Dave Miller of the Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division, and state legislators for their roles in long term planning and stated that the process would evolve over the next few years. Carroll Reasoner and Amy Truax, co-chairs of the Long Term Planning Task Force, were introduced.

Reasoner introduced herself and her co-chair, Amy Truax. Reasoner stated that the Long Term Planning Task Force met last Thursday, August 7, with 22 Task Force members and 25 Resource Group members present. Presenters from Iowa State University, FEMA, and community and regional planning provided pertinent information to the group. Reasoner stated that the Task Force identified basic needs which included accurate assessments of risk based on location; a holistic approach to community, which included affordable, safe, efficient housing, access to quality health care, access to education, access to commercial goods and services, access to cultural and aesthetic amenities, and the sense of community; and wise rebuilding of infrastructure.

Truax thanked Reasoner and stated that themes discussed by the Task Force included the need and benefits of planning coordination; the balancing act of recognizing roles and responsibilities of local governments; the need for consistency in direction, coordination, and prioritization in planning; and a plan to recover from the next disaster that builds on what is in place now and what is learned from this disaster. Guiding principles that framed discussion included to identify and create fiscal capacity, regional solutions, and disaster resilience development.

Truax introduced AJ Mumm, Polk County Emergency Management Coordinator. Mumm stated that it was an honor to be at the meeting and to serve on the Long Term Planning Task Force. One thing that struck him was something he had heard with regard to Hurricane Katrina, that "there was no shortage of plans, only a shortage of planning". Mumm stated that it was his hope to take advantage of the planning process, which provides a definition of roles and responsibilities and a pathway to recovery vision. Mumm stated that Emergency Management is uniquely suited for this purpose because it is multijurisdictional, multi-hazard, and multi-disciplinary. Mumm explained that the number of disciplines involved in disaster recovery has been unprecedented. There is a need to restore basic services, but at the same time address long term recovery issues. Mumm stated that this will lay foundation for future disasters. The Emergency Management community stands ready to implement recommendations that come

out of the Rebuild Iowa recommendations process. Their role is to facilitate the process in local communities to bring stakeholders together and integrate the recovery plan with comprehensive environmental considerations.

Major General Dardis introduced Administrator Dave Miller of Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division to share recovery activities in local communities. Miller stated that in Emergency Management, local communities are the most vital entity. Many times, Emergency Management officials do not have the relationships to go in and initiate the planning process. A multi-hazard plan identifies threats in a community, as well as what will be done to mitigate that threat and minimize losses. There is a need for that integrated planning process; the Emergency management plan cannot sit alone. Miller explained that it is the interaction within communities that is crucial for the success of planning. Miller stated that mitigation grants help communities make those plans.

Congressman Braley stated that many local entities are currently undertaking post-disaster mitigation, and that the House increased funding for pre-disaster mitigation initiatives. Congressman Braley asked Miller how communities who were unaffected by the floods might tap into these funds.

Miller stated that pre-disaster mitigation plans are extremely necessary and are now awarded through a competitive grant process. Miller explained that the legislation guaranteed a minimum amount to Iowa. Another incentive to create funds is that if local areas do not plan, they cannot receive the state share of disaster funding. Miller stated that Iowa has one of the highest levels of planning and has utilized Councils of Government and other entities to carry out planning processes. Miller stated that too often, the process depends on Emergency Management coordinators with limited resources.

Lieutenant Governor Judge stated that in long term planning, there has been work with Emergency Support Function 14 (ESF 14) staff from FEMA. Steve Castaner of ESF 14 has been working to complete assessments with local communities that examine capacities and damages and work with communities to streamline and coordinate possible solutions to meeting their needs. Castner stated that local populations desire to be a part of the planning process.

Governor Culver asked about the ESF 14 team in Cedar Rapids. Castaner explained that there are 30 people on site waiting to join communities at the level they want help.

Major General Dardis asked about the percentage of communities who have participated in the planning process. Miller stated he was unaware of the exact number, but there is a large percentage of communities who are currently participating in the planning process. Miller explained that ESF 14 comes in when coordination is needed, and smaller communities are among those who may not participate in planning. Miller stated that people are sent to communities to help them facilitate recovery planning.

A Commission member asked if there was a template that communities could use as a resource for planning. Miller explained that communities utilize the Hazard Mitigation component, and there is a constant sharing of information, and the process effectively provides ownership to local communities. Castaner stated that there is a Self Help level for the ESF 14 program that is available on the Internet at www.fema.gov that guides communities through recovery. Castner noted that buyouts are a tool used only when communities come to consensus.

Congressman Braley asked the Long Term Planning Task Force co-chairs if they talked to participants about the conflict between the need to have a good long-term plan and getting started on immediate action. Reasoner confirmed that the tension has been evident, and Truax stated that they encouraged the group to envision Iowa in five and ten years down the road.

Major General Dardis introduced Bill Bywater, the chair of the Flood Plain Management and Hazard Mitigation Task Force. The Task Force included 24 Task Force members, with additional Resource Group members and subject matter experts. Bywater stated that presentations on Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) and levees were given. He said that the top priority that emerged was that people find housing immediately. He said that floodplain mapping was another recommendation, including investing in LiDAR technology to complete. There are 133 mapped communities that do not participate in the National Flood Insurance Program because of eligibility criteria and other reasons. Emphasis was placed on watersheds and containing water upstream as critical to real solutions to flooding. Discussion at the Task Force meeting included achieving this through physical structures such as levees and reservoirs, through adaptations in agricultural practices, and in design of community developments to increase infiltration. Bywater reported that the Army Corps of Engineers would repair the Oakville levee by November 30 under an emergency expedited order. The policy discussions that emerged from the work of the Task Force include sensitive issues, including land use, zoning, and building codes, all issues that emerged after the 1993 floods, as well. Ultimately, the Task Force encourages regional and watershed cooperation to achieve better management of water and to best identify and implement mitigation projects.

Bywater introduced Barbara Lynch of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Lynch stated that Director Rich Leopold was unable to attend this RIAC meeting. Lynch stated that DNR is represented because as part of their agency charge they have the responsibility of floodplain permitting. Lynch explained that priority needs identified by the Task Force include housing, education and public awareness, and greater hazard mitigation planning in the future. Flood insurance was also discussed, and is only required for homes financed by federal dollars. Education and knowledge is needed to educate the public about flood insurance implications. Lynch stated that changes in Iowa's landscape, including the hydrologic impact, need to be considered. Maps also need to be used to plan for better response in the future, since it will not be 100 years before the next flood. It will be extremely important for the state to maintain a leadership role.

A Commission member asked if there were federal or state regulations requiring communities to plan with other floodplain communities to discuss impacts downstream. Lynch stated that drainage laws go through a planning process that involves multiple agencies, including DNR and the Army Corps of Engineers. To apply, it is required to perform joint submission to both DNR and the Army Corps of Engineers.

A Commission member asked if a group is looking at the statewide watershed to examine the big picture. Lynch stated that the Upper Mississippi Plan involves drainage districts, the Army Corps, and DNR, and the state is now reviewing what should become of that process. Lynch explained that shorter-term planning is implemented through the Army Corps and DNR.

Governor Culver noted that after the floods of 1993, recommendations were provided regarding hazard mitigation, and some communities implemented those recommendations, others did not. Governor Culver stated that the Valley Junction community in Des Moines made significant improvements based on suggestions and was consequentially not flooded in 2008. Governor

Culver stated that cost has become an issue for communities, as well, and often becomes a factor in making difficult decisions.

Miller stated that in Cedar Falls and Waterloo, a lot of mitigation activity had been pursued prior to the disasters, but that they were not sufficient enough to prevent flooding.

A Commission member stated that because of changes in the landscape, there may occur flooding more often.

A Commission member stated that in order for the Comprehensive Plan to work, all communities have to participate. The Commission member stated that there needs to be enforcement of the watershed planning efforts.

Miller emphasized the need for LiDAR and noted that flood mapping modernization has not been included in federal legislation for Iowa. In order for such legislation to move forward, Iowa needs to do it on its own.

Major General Dardis asked about the costs.

Lynch explained that estimates have been \$15 million for the state, part of which is already contracted. DNR currently partners with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and the Army Corps of Engineers to make the maps and begin the process, which will take several years.

Governor Culver added that when he met with the FEMA director, they discussed the mapping challenge. Iowa has asked FEMA to help with that cost. Governor Culver stated that the Army Corps of Engineers has recently required all cities and counties to recertify their levees, but the problem is that most cities and counties cannot afford to do that. Governor Culver explained that he has spoken to FEMA and Speaker Pelosi about the possibility of a match program to enable local communities to complete the levee improvement process. In the long run it will be a stronger system and will save money in the future.

A Commission member asked about back testing and whether technicians will be able to assess how much rain fell and when. Lynch explained that there probably is capacity to do that. Lynch stated that their focus has been on emergency rebuilding.

A Commission member stated that he was sure that would be happening in the future, and that the process involves a combination of technologies that already exist. The Commission member noted that volumes and velocities of water have never been experienced before, so they did not know to model at such a large magnitude of water.

Miller stated that the Weather Service provides advanced hydrological prediction, which provides historical perspective about flooding. That information constantly changes with construction of new buildings and bridges, and LiDAR mapping helps with that. Lynch added that it needs to be continually updated.

A Commission member stated that the Agriculture and Environment Task Force must look into sensitive issues that will require discussion. The Commission member stated that long-term issues were discussed at length and that Cedar Rapids maps of flooding included areas that were not included in the 500 year floodplain map. The Commission member mentioned that

upstream tributaries also should be discussed, with consideration for differing opinions on controlling water through levees and watersheds.

A Commission member stated that he had heard that Iowa has no comprehensive plan for all rivers in the state, but Illinois does. Lynch confirmed that this was true.

Miller stated that connectivity has been lost between other entities such as Economic Development. There is conflict regarding these issues, but there is a need to comprehensively plan.

A Commission member added that local communities need certain staff capacity to coordinate efforts in local areas. In many cases, it is done by part-time or limited staff. Some paperwork can only be completed by Emergency Management Coordinators.

Major General Dardis stated that there will be an opportunity for the RIAC to discuss these issues more in depth in the following week's meeting on August 25 and 26. Major General Dardis dismissed the group for a break.

Major General Dardis introduced Linda Larkin, chair of the Public Health and Health Care Task Force. Larkin explained that 25 individuals participated in the Task Force as Task Force members, and additional people were involved as members of the Resource Group. The Task Force focused on basic human needs, public health, mental health, and health care. The Task Force recommendations included the following:

- Mental health services should be available statewide to local communities for individuals impacted by the disasters.
- State and local organizations should monitor demands on critical public health and health programs and provide resources to ensure adequate capacity.
- The state should identify policy barriers that prevent the use of existing resources for disaster recovery and implement greater program flexibility.
- The state, in partnership with local agencies, should strengthen the public health and health infrastructure for current and future disaster response.
- The state should provide for the broad health needs of individuals in times of disaster.

Larkin stated that case management is an immediate need that would help to guide people through the system. Additionally, coordination between public health entities is important to respond to the disasters. Larkin spoke about efforts to provide mental health public education to help reduce stigma associated with mental illness.

Larkin introduced Donna Harvey of the Hawkeye Valley Area Agency on Aging (AAA). Harvey thanked the staff members and chairs involved with the Task Force. Harvey stated that local recovery efforts would begin to implement case management. There are more than 2,000 older adults registered with FEMA within the Hawkeye Valley AAA jurisdiction, and many of them do not know their needs. Harvey predicted that at Christmas and holiday time, the implications of the disasters would be significantly exacerbated. Harvey noted that flexible funding has allowed older adults to purchase shoes lost in the disasters. Mental health issues are continuing to grow, and the Hawkeye Valley Area Agency on Aging has coordinated with Pathways to complete mental health outreach. Harvey stated that an issue has been with asking the right questions, and for the next disaster it will be important to anticipate those questions. Harvey stated that on May 25, area residents lost reception to their satellite televisions. There needs to be considerations made for limited communication capacity for rural areas and older adults.

Michael Rosmann of AgriWellness, Inc. introduced himself and explained that he has been in charge of mental health outreach during past disasters. Rosmann stated that the emotional toll incurred after disasters is often more difficult to recover from than any physical damage. Rosmann explained that people who are provided crisis counseling immediately and have the service available long-term, experience better results and recoveries over time than those who do not have crisis counseling available to them. Rosmann stated that preparedness planning is needed at local levels, the state level, and the federal level. Regarding mental health needs, short-term recovery is usually funded through FEMA, and long-term recovery is funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), so there is a responsibility to ensure that plans are in compliance with SAMHSA considerations. Rosmann explained that there is a need to share information across departments and a need for a set of disaster responders that are not covered by public and private providers of behavioral health, including mental health and substance abuse. Rosmann stated that preparedness is uneven throughout the state. There is a need for behavioral health professionals in rural areas. Rosmann stated that mental health evaluation and crisis counseling have been important during previous disasters and there is a need for people serving different areas to be from those areas to better understand the cultural implications of mental health.

Rosmann introduced Director Tom Newton of the Iowa Department of Public Health. Newton thanked the RIAC for its work and said that he has witnessed the Public Health community come together to respond to community needs. Newton assured the Congressional delegation that the post 9/11 funding to Public Health for response has aided with this cooperation. Newton stated that Public Health completes community assessments, which include surveillance of diseases, collection of data on the causes of diseases, water testing, and mosquito surveillance.

Most mosquitoes found in flooded areas are not disease-carrying, but rather nuisance mosquitoes. There have been a few cases of West Nile Virus in Iowa, and more cases are predicted. Newton stated that there would be outreach to communities to protect them from mosquito exposure. Public services may not see an immediate demand, but there will be an increased need for human services over time. For example, the WIC nutritional program is hitting an all-time high, which may be exacerbated in the future by the disasters. Newton noted that federal officials have been alerted to that. Newton stated that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention contributed to Public Health teams of people who went door to door to identify needs and levels of public education. Newton stated that there needs to be communication to the public by multiple means in order to inform the public about available public assistance.

Major General Dardis thanked the presenters and asked the audience for comments and questions. Major General Dardis stated that he had heard common themes of the needs for communication and planning.

Deliverables for the Next Commission Meeting

Major General Dardis stated that all Task Forces have submitted draft reports, and Commission members will have final reports from all Task Forces by Friday, August 22 with discussion to follow at Commission meetings on Monday, August 25 from 1:00 – 5:30 pm, and the morning of Tuesday, August 26. Both meetings will take place in Urbandale. These meetings will finalize recommendations for the 45-day report.

A Commission member asked when the deadline for comments was. Major General Dardis stated that it will vary depending on Task Forces. All reports will be back to Commission members by Friday, August 22, to read over the weekend.

A Commission member asked when reports would be delivered. Arlinda McKeen of State Public Policy Group stated they were hoping to mail all Task Force reports on Thursday night, August 21, to arrive to all RIAC Commissioners on Friday, August 22.

Major General Dardis encouraged the group to participate in the Speak Up Iowa session. Major General Dardis thanked the Commission and adjourned the meeting.